Telephone to Panchayat Members of Priority

435. SHRI JOY NADUKKARA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Municipal Counsellors were enjoying the benefit of special category for getting telephone connections and the presidents of Gram Panchayats, Block Panchayats member and District Panchayats members are not getting this benefit; and

(b) if so, whether Govemment propose to take steps to give the same facilities to members of Panchayats as to municipal counsellors?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BEM PRASAD VARMA): (a) Sir, apart from Municipal Counsellors, the Members of Zila Parishad are entitled for registration of telephones under Non-OYT-SS category.

(b) There is no such proposal at present.

Safeguards for Telephone Tapping

436. SHRI SANATAN BISI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether telephone tapping is permissible under the Indian Telegraph Act; and

(b) if so, the details of the conditions and safeguards?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The details of the conditions and safeguards are governed under Section 5 of the Indian Telegraph Act 1885 are annexed as statement.

Statement

Power for Govemment to take possession of licensed telegraphs and to order interception of messages:—

(1) On the occurrence of any public emergency, or in the interest of the public safety, the Central Govemment or a State Govemment or any Officer specially authorised in this behalf by th Central Govemment or a State Government may, if satisfied that it is necessary or expedient so to do, take temporary possession (for so long as the public emergency exists or the interest of the public safety requires the taking of such action) of any telegraph established, maintained or worked by any person licensed under this Act.

(2) On the occurence of any public emergency, or in the interest of the public safety, the Central Govemment or a State Government or any Officer specially authorised in this behalf by the Central Government or a State Government may, if satisfied that it is necessary or expedient so to do in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, frcindly relations with foreign States or public order or for preventing incitement to the commission of an offence, for reasons to be recorded in writing, by order, direct that any message or class of messages to or from any person or class of persons, or relating to any particular subject, brought for transmission by or transmitted or-received by-any telegraph, shall not be transmitted, or shall be intercepted or detained, or shall be disclosed to the Government making the order or an Officer thereof mentioned in the order:

Provided that the press messages intended to be published in India of correspondents accredited to the Central Government or a State Govemment shall not be intercepted or detained, unless their transmission has been prohibited under this sub-section.

Expansion of Basic Telecommunicatlo. service

437 DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: WiH the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the progress made during the current year in the expansion of basic tele-communication services;